

This is the first authentic instance, of Brahminy Duck being sighted and shot in Coimbatore District. The duck weighed 3 lbs. It had no black ring round the neck.

About the edible qualities of this duck, opinions differ, true to the maxim "One man's meat is another man's poison." As the first bird seen and collected here and to ascertain the fact whether it is fit or unfit for the table, it was plucked and cooked (though I advised skinning). It was extremely fishy and uneatable. The bird had fed on green algae, its beak, mouth, throat and gullet were all full of green algae, emitting a bad odour. On 17-xi-1974 another duck was shot from the same Tank. This was also without the black necklace and weighed only $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. It was skinned and cooked and was fair and quite eatable.

On 22-xi-1974 two more ducks weighing 1 Kg. each, were shot. These also had no black ring round the neck. One of these was skinned, cleaned and hung up for a night and then cooked the next morning. It was very good with no fishy odour at all.

18, PERUMAL KOIL STREET,
FORT,
COIMBATORE 641 001,
December 18, 1974.

B. SUBBIAH PILLAI

6. ON THE OCCURRENCE OF THE REDNECKED PHALAROPE (*PHALAROPUS LOBATUS*) ON INLAND WATERS IN BANGALORE

On 30th October 1973, during a session of wader photography from a hide, I noticed a phalarope in the company of wagtails, sandpipers, plovers and stints, feeding on marshy ground adjoining a nearby farm.

The bird was extremely wary and did not approach the hide as closely as did the other birds. It was identified as the Rednecked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus* by its fine, blackish bill, dark striped mantle, and the black legs. The white wing-bar noticeable in flights was not seen due to the lack of all-round vision from my hide.

The bird, though it did not seem averse to feeding on the mud-bank with the other birds, seemed to prefer to feed in a small whirlpool of water caused by a waste-outlet pipe discharging into one of the small pools. The bird was unusually wary in relation with my past experience of the bird in Scandinavia, and did not come closer than thirty feet from my camera, permitting only a distant 'record' photograph.

The bird was again seen the following day, and four days later on 4th November, though never again after that date. During flight, the bird showed a wing pattern similar to that of a Little Stint, a dark upperpart with a noticeable wing bar.

All observations were made through a 500 mm telephoto lens, and a 10 × 50 field glasses.

163, DOMLUR LAYOUT,
BANGALORE 560 007,
June 22, 1974.

SATISH S. MENON

7. CROW-PHEASANT AND FINCH-LARKS

Last summer, while observing partridges with their broods I happened to see a crow-pheasant sitting on the ground and ducking its head to escape the insistent aerial attacks of a female finch-lark. The crow-pheasant had something in its bill and finch-lark was trying to rout the intruder.

When I moved towards them, the crow-pheasant flew away with its morsel followed by the finch-lark in hot pursuit.

Nearing the spot. I saw a fresh nest on the ground, with a dead, partially plucked male finch-lark lying in it. It had a gaping wound on its head through which the brain was bulging out. By its side there was a lifeless nestling.

A. J. COLLEGE,
SIVAKASI,
August 2, 1974.

A. J. T. JOHNSINGH

8. A NOTE ON THE SWIFTLETS (*COLLOCALIA*) FOUND IN BURMA

The systematics of this group have for a long time been confused, because morphological differences between species are unobtrusive and, in extreme cases, may even be undetectable. The review by Lord Medway ("Field characters as a guide to the specific relations of swiftlets". *Proc. Linn. Soc. London* 177, 2:151-172. 1966) and earlier papers by the same author have cleared up most of the problems in the group. The account given in *THE BIRDS OF BURMA* 2nd edition (1953) is now out of date, and needs to be revised as indicated below.

Two characters of the living bird, not normally available to the museum worker, have proved of great taxonomic value.

The first is the ability to orientate acoustically by means of echolocation. When in flight in darkness or poor light those species possessing the faculty utter a penetrating rattle-like call, composed of an irregular succession of brief clicks, invariably audible to man. *C. esculenta* does not utter this call, but all the other Burmese species probably do,